applications received in September & October 1995, the number of applications received in the same months in 1996 was 39,779. Further, a number of applications received by Post were found to be incomplete, resulting in delays in processing of such applications.

(c) The backlog is expected to be cleared within three months. The backlog is being cleared through employment of additional hands on a temporary basis and through longer hours being put in by existing officials. Further, a new passport office would be opened soon in Visakhapatnam and a passport collection centre is to be opened in Vijayawada.

Setting up of Standing Committee of Inter-State Council

65. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up a Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council to examine in depth contentious issues of Centre-State relations and present issue of Art. 356 for imposition of President Rules;

(b) whether the Committee is of a permanent nature; and

(c) if not, by when the Committee is expected to submit its report to Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (c) In the second meeting of the Inter-State Council held on 15.10.1996 it was recommended that there should be a Standing Committee of the Council for continuous consultations and processing of matters for the consideration of the Council. The matter is under active consideration.

Privitisation of Spinning Mills in Orissa

66. SHRI RAHAS BIHARI BARIK: Will Ihe Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of spinning mills in Orissa;

(b) whether Government have privatised some of those spinning mills;

(c) the reasons for privatising those spinning mills; and

(d) whether Government propose to privatise remaining spinning mills?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) There are 13 Spinning mills in Orissa, including I of the NTC WBAB &O) Ltd., 1 belonging to Orissa State Textile Corporation. 3 belonging to ABS Orissa Ltd. (a subsidiary of Industrial Development Corporation of Orissa), as well as 7 in the Cooperative Sector.

(b) and (c) The mill under NTC management has not been privatised. However, the State Government of Orissa have informed that the Cooperative Spinning Mill at Gangpur in the Distt, of Sundargarh was privatised in the year 1993-94 following poor operational and financial performance, resources crunch, and in order to attract private investment.

(d) As far as the Central Government is concerned, there is no proposal to privatise any spinning mill in Orissa, at present.

राष्ट्रीय वस्त्र निगम की मिलों को लाभकारी बनाने हेतु अल्प अवधि योजना

67. **श्री राम जेठमलानी:** क्या वस्त्र मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि राष्ट्रीय वस्त्र निगम के अधीन चलाई जा रही मिलों को लाभकारी बनाने के लिए एक अल्पावधि योजना तैयार की गई है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस योजना का ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ग) क्या इस योजना के अधीन लाभान्वित होने वाली इकाइयों की पहचान कर ली गई है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो ये कौन-कौन से इकाइयां हैं और यदि नहीं, तो इनकी पहचान कब तक किए जाने की संभावना है?

वस्त्र मंत्री (श्री आर. एल. जालप्पा): (क) एन. टी. सी. मिलों के पुनरूद्धार के लिए अभी तक कोई अल्पावधि योजना नहीं बनाई गई है।

(ख) से (घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठते।

Telephone and STD Facilities in Villages

68. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that the telephone facilities in villages are an essential infrastructure for the development of rural sector in the country;

(b) if so, by when the entire villages of the country are likely to be covered with telephone facilities with STD; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) By end of IXth Five Year Plan, the department is planning to provide telephone facilities to all the villages and STD facilities to all the Telephone Exchanges in the country.

Cops abetting illegal construction in Delhi

69. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Cops are abetting illegal construction in Delhi;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the number of cops involved therein and the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (c) There have been some isolated instances in which individual police officials are alleged to have been involved in unauthorised construction in Delhi. During the current year, one such instance has come to the notice of the Delhi Police. The suspect police official has been departmentally proceeded against.

Small scale units engaged in defence equipment production

70. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that small industrial units are also engaged in manufacture and supply of defence equipments and spares in the country;

(b) if so, the salient features of the role played by them in this regard;

(c) the number of small industrial units from Maharashtra supplying defence equipments and spares; and

(d) the steps Government have taken to encourage these units to expand their activities and increase the participation of other entrepreneurs in this regard from the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b)The contribution of small industrial units towards development and manufacture of defence equipment and spares has been very significant. During the year 1995-96 over 40% of the total value of ab-initio development orders placed by the Supplies Wing/Technical Committees were on small scale industrial units.

(c) At present, 323 industrial units from Maharashtra are registered for suppy of Defence equipment and spares to the Defence Services.

(d) In order to encourage greater participation of the private sector and specifically the small industrial units in the development of defence equipment, a time bound Action Plan in association with Development Commissioner (Small Scale Industry) was drawn by the Ministry during 1994. As a follow up action, workshops and exhibitions are periodically organised in various States for the representatives of small industrial units to identify the equipment required by the Defence and manufacture the same to meet Defence requirements. Method of registration of Industrial units for supply of stores to Defence has been simplified and made more liberal.

Operating ISD/STD/PCO booths in Andhra Pradesh

71. DR. MOHAN BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of ISD/STD/PCO booths in operation in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) the steps taken to provide adequate STD/PCO services in pubic places in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Number of STD/ISD Public Telephones in Andhra Pradesh as on 30.9.96 are 7894.